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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HO CHI MINH CITY 000750

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

TERREP

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/EAP, DS/DSS/ITA, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/CC,
DS/ICI/CI and EAP/BCLTV

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC PTER VM CTERR

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE TERRORIST SIGHTING IN HO CHI MINH CITY

¶1. (SBU) ON JUNE 2, 2004, AT 11:00 HOURS, RSO MET WITH TWO AMCITS WHO WERE CURRENTLY ON A BUSINESS TRIP TO HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM. BOTH AMCITS REPORTED THAT THEY ARE STAYING AT THE SHERATON SAIGON HOTEL IN HO CHI MINH CITY. THEY SAID THAT ON THE NIGHT OF JUNE 1 AT APPROXIMATELY 22:00 HOURS, THEY WENT TO THE 23RD FLOOR NIGHTCLUB AT THE SHERATON AND TOOK A TABLE ON THE UPPER TIER OF THE CLUB. THE TABLE WAS LOCATED BY THE RAILING THAT OVERLOOKED THE DANCE FLOOR AND WAS LOCATED NEAR THE STAIRWAY THAT LEADS DOWN TO THE DANCE FLOOR.

¶2. (SBU) WHILE THERE, BOTH AMCITS SPOTTED AN INDIVIDUAL WHO LOOKED AND WAS DRESSED IN AN OUTFIT THAT SEEMED WAY OUT OF PLACE. THE INDIVIDUAL LOOKED LIKE HE WAS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND WAS WEARING A BLUE, BULKY COAT THAT WENT DOWN TO HIS KNEES (DEFINITELY NOT DANCING CLOTHES, AND EVEN THOUGH THE NIGHTCLUB IS AIRCONDITIONED, THE TEMPERATURE OFTEN RISES TO 80 DEGREES). THE COAT HAD WHITE SIX-INCH LETTERS ON THE BACK THAT SAID "ALITALIA". THE SUBJECT WAS ALSO WEARING BLUE UNIFORM PANTS AND THE AMCITS DESCRIBED HIM AS LOOKING LIKE "AN AIRLINE BAGGAGE HANDLER." THE AMCITS SAID THE INDIVIDUAL WAS IN HIS LATE 20S TO EARLY 30S, APPROXIMATELY 5'8" TO 5'10" TALL, HAD WELL-GROOMED SHORT BLACK HAIR AND PROMINENT EARS. WHILE THE AMCITS OBSERVED THE INDIVIDUAL WATCHING PEOPLE COME UP AND DOWN THE STAIRS, THE INDIVIDUAL SUDDENLY MOVED OVER TO STAND NEXT TO THEM, ONLY INCHES AWAY. THE INDIVIDUAL STAYED THERE FOR APPROXIMATELY 15 MINUTES, AND THE AMCITS GOT A GOOD LOOK AT HIM. THE SUBJECT THEN MOVED BACK TO THE STAIRS BRIEFLY AND WALKED DOWN THE STAIRS AND DEPARTED THE CLUB AT APPROXIMATELY 22:50 HOURS.

¶3. (SBU) THE AMCITS WERE CONCERNED ENOUGH THAT THEY WENT TO THE HOTEL'S INTERNET SERVICE COMPUTER AND CHECKED THE FBI MOST WANTED TERRORIST WEBSITE. BASED ON THE PHOTOS ON THE WEBSITE, THEY HAVE IDENTIFIED THE INDIVIDUAL AS FAHID MOHAMMED ALLY MSALAM; DPOB: 19 FEBRUARY 1976 IN MOMBASSA, KENYA AND WANTED IN CONNECTION OF THE EAST AFRICAN EMBASSY BOMBINGS IN 1998.

¶4. (SBU) AMCITS SUPPLYING INFORMATION:

NAME: KAMM, CHRISTIAN PHILLIP
DPOB: 30 OCTOBER 1967 OHIO
PPT#: 155313415

NAME: HERBERT, STEVEN ALAN
DPOB: 20 AUGUST 1953 RHODE ISLAND
PPT#: 104003089.

BOTH AMCITS REPORTED THAT THEY WOULD BE IN VIETNAM UNTIL JUNE 4, 2004 AND WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS THE MATTER FURTHER.

¶5. (SBU) ACTIONS TAKEN: RSO HCMC CONTACTED RSO HANOI TO REPORT INCIDENT. RSO HANOI PASSED INFORMATION ON TO AMBASSADOR, DCM AND FBI LEGATT BANGKOK. RSO HCMC ALSO INFORMED CG, DPO AND DHS OIC RICK SELL. RSO HANOI AND RSO HCMC CONTACTED RESPECTIVE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY (MPS) CONTACTS TO ARRANGE MEETINGS WITH COUNTERPARTS TO INFORM THEM OF THE MATTER AND REQUEST IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE. RSOS HANOI AND HCMC APPRISED LGF AND SD TEAMS OF THE SITUATION AND DISSEMINATED FBI FLYERS OF THE SUBJECT TO ALL LGF POSTS. RSOS ALSO DISSEMINATED FBI FLYERS TO ALL APARTMENT BUILDINGS IN WHICH USG MEMBERS AND FAMILIES ARE RESIDING.

¶6. (SBU) RSO HCMC ALSO VISITED THE SHERATON SAIGON HOTEL AND SPOKE WITH THE GENERAL MANAGER AND THE SECURITY CHIEF REGARDING THE MATTER. THE SECURITY CHIEF NOTED THAT NONE OF HIS GUARD FORCE REPORTED ANYONE LOOKING OR ACTING SUSPICIOUS THE PREVIOUS NIGHT. RSO VIEWED VIDEOTAPES FROM THE NIGHT BEFORE OF THE TWO ELEVATOR BANKS WITH DEDICATED ACCESS TO THE NIGHTCLUB, BUT THEY WERE OF SUCH POOR QUALITY THAT PEOPLE WERE UNRECOGNIZABLE. THE GENERAL MANAGER AGREED TO HOLD THE TAPE FOR 60 DAYS IN THE EVENT OTHERS WANTED TO VIEW IT. RSO LEFT A COPY OF THE FBI FLYER WITH THE GENERAL MANAGER TO DISSEMINATE AMONG HIS SECURITY STAFF. RSO ALSO BRIEFLY VISITED THE INDIAN JAMIA MUSLIM MOSQUE LOCATED ONE HALF-BLOCK FROM THE SHERATON AND SHOWED THE THREE SECURITY GUARDS THERE A PICTURE OF THE SUBJECT. THE GUARDS, WHILE HELPFUL, DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE SUBJECT.

¶7. (SBU) DHS OIC RICK SELL REPORTED TALKING TO MPS CONTACTS, WHO SAID THAT THEY ARE TAKING THE REPORT VERY SERIOUSLY AND HAVE ALERTED ALL AIR, SEA PORTS AND BORDER CROSSING AREAS OF THE SUBJECT AND THE SITUATION. MPS ALSO REPORTED THAT THERE ARE SIX

MPS OFFICERS DEDICATED TO THIS MATTER. THEY ARE CURRENTLY CONDUCTING RECORD CHECKS TO SEE IF ANYONE UNDER THE SUBJECT'S NAME OF ALIASES HAS EITHER ENTERED OR DEPARTED VIETNAM. SELL ALSO DISTRIBUTED FBI FLYERS TO THE MPS. RSO AND DHS OIC WILL MEET WITH VIETNAMESE POLICE AND SECURITY ELEMENTS IN THE MORNING TO GET AN UPDATE ON THEIR PROGRESS.

18. (SBU) RSO NOTES: RSO BELIEVES THAT THE TWO AMCITS WHO REPORTED THE INFORMATION REGARDING THE SUBJECT ARE SINCERE AND CONCERNED ABOUT SPOTTING THIS INDIVIDUAL. BOTH WERE VERY COOPERATIVE. THEY ARE CERTAIN THAT DUE TO THE LENGTH OF TIME THEY VIEWED THE SUBJECT CLOSE UP, THAT WHEN THEY SAW THE PICTURE ON THE FBI WEBSITE, THE INDIVIDUAL MATCHED THE PICTURE OF MSALAM. THE SHERATON SAIGON HOTEL IS THE ONLY UPSCALE HOTEL IN HCMC THAT HAS AN IMMEDIATELY IDENTIFIABLE "AMERICAN" NAME. THE NIGHTCLUB FEATURES AN AMERICAN/CANADIAN BAND THAT PLAYS THERE SEVEN NIGHTS A WEEK. RSO WILL REPORT BACK SOONEST ON ANY INFORMATION THAT IS DEVELOPED.

YAMAUCHI